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from the real value of a book which will hold an honourable position among the *Westminster Commentaries*, and will worthily stand next to Professor Driver's *Genesis*. My remarks would merely urge that there comes a stage where exegesis is influenced by one's formulated views of the course of Israelite history, and that the prevailing views cannot stand against external evidence. In this I may claim the support of those who have attempted independent reconstructions of their own, and I would emphasize the fact that their disagreement among themselves as to the particular form which the reconstruction must take is not so significant as their recognition that a new one is necessary.

STANLEY A. COOK.

#### DR. PHILIPSON'S HISTORY OF REFORM JUDAISM.

*The Reform Movement in Judaism.* By David Philipson, D.D. New York: the Macmillan Co., 1907. Pp. viii, 581.

CONSIDERABLY over a century has elapsed since German Jewry first felt the pangs of the new birth now known as Reform Judaism. Young hopefuls hailed the birth of another deliverer destined, as they thought, to lead them from bondage to freedom, from darkness to light. Wary, inert old age shook its disapproving head, preferring the then familiar bondage to a long-forgotten freedom, and fearing to expose its dark-adapted eyes to the glare of an unknown light. Thus, at once hailed and dreaded, blessed and cursed, the young offspring of Judaism started on its difficult path amid the loud clamour of contending parties—only to belie the prophecies of both, turning out to be neither such a blessing nor such a curse as had been foretold. True, a hundred years are but as a day in the history of a movement such as the reform movement. If the period is long enough to enable one to judge, and even to find fault, still it is at all events not long enough to justify despair. But it is time, high time indeed, to take a survey of the movement from its beginnings till the present day. This task Dr. David Philipson, of Cincinnati, has accomplished in a highly satisfactory manner. *The Reform Movement in Judaism* is a capital book, and every liberal Jew should read it. It is a thoroughly reliable history based on the original sources, to which copious references are given. Some of the chapters of this book have been separately published before, in this *Review*. But even these chapters are well worth re-reading in their fuller context.

Dr. Philipson divides his historical survey into thirteen chapters, treating of the following themes: the beginning of the reform move-

ment in Judaism ; the second generation of reformers ; the Geiger-Titkin affair ; the Hamburg Temple prayer-book controversy ; reform in England ; the Frankfurt society of "Friends of Reform" ; the Rabbinical Conferences, 1844-6 ; reform in Hungary ; the Leipzig and Augsburg synods ; reform in the United States ; recent developments in Europe.

Dr. Philipson takes account only of the "corporate activities" which translated the theories of the reformers into practice. "Many statements of individual scholars and writers, however interesting as contributions to the store of liberal Jewish thought, could not be included, since this is not a history of the literary output, but of the practical achievements of reform. This point can be well illustrated by adverting to the case in Russia. There a number of prominent writers have pleaded strongly for reform in religious practice and belief, but no public official steps have been taken towards carrying out these reforms. The reform movement has found no lodgement in the corporate and congregational life of Russia, hence no chapter is devoted to Russia in this work, however illuminating might be the statements that can be culled from the writings of Russian Jewish authors." This limitation is regrettable, but, of course, every author has a right to fix the scope of his book.

The forces which started the reform movement are to be sought in the new intellectual, social and political aspirations of the Jews in the closing decades of the eighteenth century. Jewry was growing weary of being intellectual casuists, social pariahs, political non-entities. There was a craving for other than Talmudic knowledge, for other than Ghetto society, and for a higher destiny than that of a passive victim at the mercy of every capricious polity. All these tendencies were most clearly exemplified in Moses Mendelssohn and his circle. Hence, although there is much in the reform movement that Mendelssohn would have disapproved, and although much of its blundering and groping in the dark is not to be laid at his door, still the reform movement may and must trace its origin to the Mendelssohnian circle. As a matter of fact the early reformers did claim intellectual descent from Moses Mendelssohn ; and their opponents charged him with the responsibility for the new heresy and all its supposed pernicious consequences. It is also noteworthy that Heine, who was certainly in touch with those early reformers, unhesitatingly described Mendelssohn as the Jewish Luther. It was only when living tradition was supplanted by reference to the dead letter, that Mendelssohn's share came to be minimized. His view of Judaism as a divine legislation, apparently favouring the retention of all Jewish practices intact, seemed and still seems to compel reformers to relinquish their claims on Mendelssohn, and to hand him over meekly as one of the

pillars of orthodoxy. But such an attitude, which Dr. Philipson seems too prone to adopt, only betrays a somewhat inadequate grasp of Mendelssohn's real thought and of the beginnings of most reforms. Even the world's greatest thinkers, however much they may have outgrown their age in some ways, yet remained in other ways the children of their time, retaining much of the mode of thought and expression characteristic of their social environment. And Mendelssohn was no exception. To the average Jew of the eighteenth century, Judaism without a thunder and lightning revelation on cloud-capped Sinai would have appeared the maddest and profanest of vagaries. Mendelssohn went so far as to vindicate human reason, to free human thought from the swaddling clothes of the miraculous. The fundamental truths of Judaism could be reached by the normal human understanding, without the aid of any special revelation. True, such knowledge was not yet universal, and it was the mission of Judaism to make it so.

For this purpose, however, the Socratic dialectic was competent. Once this was admitted, and even emphasized, the rest was a matter of time—the remaining positions of Reform Judaism were implicitly granted. Mendelssohn might honestly enough insist sometimes that the Jewish code of laws was of divine origin. But as soon as the sufficiency of human reason was acknowledged in the sphere of religious *truths*, it could not for long be denied in the sphere of religious *practice*, which is after all but the embodiment and outward expression of religious truths. Possibly, too, the conception of Judaism as a divine legislation may not represent the last phase of Mendelssohn's religious philosophy. There are passages in his writings in which he defends Jewish ceremonial, not on the ground of divine legislation, but simply as the last bond of union among Jews. In any case, Mendelssohn, if not a reformer himself, may well be claimed as the godfather and inspirer of the reform movement, not simply as the father of modern Jewish culture, but in a more direct way as one who anticipated much of the philosophy of the movement and indicated its true line of advance.

When the reform movement at last entered the arena of practical politics, there was an unfortunate dearth of men of Mendelssohn's calibre to preside over its destinies. Germany, the country which gave birth to the movement, has fared much better than any of the countries to which the movement has spread. If its Rabbis have not all been of the stature of Dr. Geiger, and its lay supporters, of the eminence of Professor Lazarus, still there has never been a dearth of dignified Rabbis and learned laymen. In Germany, accordingly, the reform movement has shown greatest vitality, so that its history there, constitutes the most interesting portion, and indeed the major portion of its entire history. Dr. Philipson not unreasonably devotes

something like four-fifths of his book to Germany. Of the countries to which the movement has extended—England, Hungary, and the United States—it is only in the United States that Reform Judaism shows real life. The success of American reform must be largely due to the fact that the leaders of the movement there, were men of the same type as those who conducted the German movement. "It was, in most instances, German preachers and thinkers who, in the early days, shaped the course of the American congregations in their adoption of the principles of reform." Add to this the more favourable external conditions that prevail in the United States, and it seems but natural that the hegemony of the reform movement should have devolved on American Jewry. "Although," writes Dr. Philipson, "the Jewish reform movement had its inception in Germany, and that country will always be looked upon as its birthplace, yet has this movement found its full, free, and logical development in the United States."

In England the internal conditions were essentially different. Here also the reform movement was started in imitation of the German movement; but it was a bad imitation from the first. It never had the guidance of real Jewish scholars. Its lay leaders were often money-bags; its clerics were not Rabbis but ministers, and never allowed to be anything but ministers. Stagnation was inevitable. Dr. Philipson need scarcely be surprised to find that the Reform Synagogue here "has become quite as wedded to its traditions as are the orthodox congregations to theirs." Naturally enough our author finds some cause for amusement in the coalition formed by the United Synagogue and the West London Synagogue against their common foe—Progress. Referring to the chief Rabbi's sermon on the proposal to hold supplementary Sunday services (1899), Dr. Philipson remarks: "Notable in the chief Rabbi's sermon was, not the position he took in unalterable opposition to a service on Sunday (this was natural and to be expected), but his appeal to the authorities of the West London Synagogue . . . not to countenance the movement. Truly, the whirligig of time brings its revenges. In 1842 the West London Synagogue was anathematized by the rabbis and the lay authorities of the official synagogue; in 1899 it was appealed to by a successor of the chief rabbi who had pronounced the *Cherem* upon it to join hands with him in suppressing a forward movement." And, "strange to say, the reform congregation in 1903 was almost as decided as the United Synagogue in its opposition to the Jewish Religious Union, the latest attempt at reform among English Jews."

On the whole the story of the reform movement scarcely makes cheerful reading, for it lays bare the weaknesses of modern Jewry, which the movement sought and seeks to remedy. Where there is no

freedom and no modernity there, of course, is no problem—conditions remaining essentially mediaeval. But freedom and secular education seem to act as irresistible solvents on Judaism. Some Jews manage somehow to put on blinkers, and thus retain much of their mediaeval dark-adapted outlook. Some substitute a form of ancestor-worship for the worship of God ; these are the vicariously orthodox, who think orthodox, feel orthodox, and fight orthodox, though they never dream of *living* orthodox. Then there are the many who simply drift away from Judaism, and, whether they join the Church or not, are at any rate lost to Judaism. Lastly there are the few who sympathize with all sides, and see the shortcomings of all sides, better than they can see any promising remedy, and whose every effort to check the constant leakage is thwarted not only by the growing apathy of the waverers, but also by the dog-in-the-manger policy of the militant orthodox, genuine and vicarious. Dr. Philipson seems sanguine about the future. Would one could share his confidence ! For my part I cannot think that the reform movement in England has been or is likely to be a success. This is no compliment to orthodoxy. If conservative Judaism had been successful the reform movement would never have been called into being. And if the latest attempts at reform are a failure they fail simply because the existing synagogues have so thoroughly estranged those whom it is sought to reclaim that they cannot be easily reclaimed now. Let it be frankly admitted that the reform movement in England has not been a success, still its failure also measures the failure of orthodoxy, and in any case it seems obvious that the hope of Anglo-Judaism lies either in further efforts at reform, or nowhere. It is to be hoped that Dr. Philipson was in prophetic mood when he wrote : “ the cloud of benumbing conservatism shall lift, even in England, and from the four winds will come the spirit and breathe upon the dry bones of the house of Israel, and they shall live.”

The reform movement in America must be very much alive if it can inspire Dr. Philipson with such evident satisfaction. Standing on hopeful ground lends enchantment also to distant vistas. And something like a spirit of exaltation fills our author as he pens the following noteworthy conclusion of his admirable book. “ It is almost one hundred years since the first public demonstration in the cause of Jewish reform was made in the dedication of the synagogue in West-phalia by Israel Jacobson. During this century, the most significant in the history of Jewish thought since the dispersion from Palestine, values have been readjusted, and Judaism has adapted itself to new environments in the various free countries of the world. The story of the reform movement is the record of this readjustment and this adaptation. The essentials as they appear in prophetic thought

remain unchanged, it is only the interpretation and expression of these essentials as demanded by the changed conceptions of modern life that are different from past interpretation and expression. The work of the reform movement has been, in a word, to substitute for the nationalistic, legalistic, and ceremonial form of Judaism—the product of the ages of exclusion, repression, and the ghetto—the universal and spiritual teachings that accentuate Judaism's message of ethical monotheism. The modern spirit has touched Judaism, and the reform movement sprang forth. Reform Judaism bridges antiquity and modernity, garbing the eternal verities that root in the origins of the faith in the raiment of these latter days. It proclaims the great truths that God's revelation is progressive, and that Judaism has within itself the power of adaptation to bring this revelation to successive ages. The reform movement in Judaism is part and parcel of that great change of front in the religious thought of mankind that modernity symbolizes; part, too, of the broader and freer outlook that came with the passing of mediaevalism; and as these broader and freer forces move majestically forward, there will keep pace therewith the liberal religious spirit leading men at last to God's holy hill and His tabernacle."

A. WOLF.

#### DR. LÉVY'S "UNE RELIGION RATIONNELLE."

*Une Religion Rationnelle et Laïque: La Religion du XX<sup>e</sup> Siècle*, par LOUIS-GERMAIN LÉVY, Dr. ès lettres, Rabbín de l'Union Libérale Israélite. Troisième édition corrigée et augmentée. Paris (Librairie Critique), 1908, pp. 116.

THIS is a spirited little book, written with such verve that one is almost apt to overlook the amount of learning which it embodies. It is one of those rare books which make one feel the pulse of a living religion, so unlike the lifeless skeletons dismembered in the usual religious manuals. Dr. Lévy has a message to tell, and he knows how to tell it with effect. If the bones of French Judaism are dry, he is one of those who will help to breathe the breath of life into them so that they may live. One may not agree with all he says, but one feels the better for hearing what he has to say.

The first part of the book (*La Religion devant la Science*) is devoted to a careful consideration of the relationship between religion and science and morality. As regards religion and science, there ought to be no conflict between them so long as each confines itself to its